



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

16 ILLEGAL ALIENS ARRESTED BY ICE

The aliens are suspected of being smuggled from Mexico en route to Florida

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested 16 illegal aliens Tuesday following a traffic stop made by Wyoming Highway Patrol.

Following the traffic stop for speeding eastbound on Interstate Highway 80, Wyoming Highway Patrol contacted ICE about the suspected illegal aliens. According to ICE special agents, the aliens were tightly packed in the 2000 Chevrolet Astro van which had its seats removed to create more space. All those in the van were men from Mexico.

The van was stopped near Hillsdale, Wyo., about 15 miles east of Cheyenne.

During processing, the aliens told ICE agents that they had been smuggled from Mexico to Mesa, Ariz., when they were loaded into the van. They had been on the road for two days. Agents observed that the van contained no food or water. They found bottles of urine in the van indicating that few bathroom stops were made during the trip. Their final destination was Florida. ICE agents indicated that this out-of-the-way route to Florida isn't unusual for smugglers. There may be less chance for smugglers to be stopped by law enforcement by taking a thousand-mile northerly detour.

"This case is typical of alien smugglers who pack as many aliens in vehicles as possible in order to maximize their already exorbitant profits," said Jeffrey Copp, ICE Denver special agent-in-charge. "These smugglers have no regard for human life. They treat their passengers even worse than cattle. This inhumane treatment is why ICE thoroughly investigates such cases to track down the heads of these alien-smuggling organizations." Copp heads the ICE Denver Office of Investigations which includes the states of: Wyoming, Colorado, Montana and Idaho.

Twelve aliens have been processed for immediate return to Mexico. Alien smuggling criminal charges are being pursued against the driver and co-driver of the vehicle. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Cheyenne, Wyo., has agreed to seek prosecution.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.